

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A microencapsulation system, comprising:
 - 2 a microcapsule production unit;
 - 3 a fluidized passage for washing and harvesting microcapsules dispensed from the
 - 4 microcapsule production unit;
 - 5 a flow sensor for sizing and counting the microcapsules; and
 - 6 a controller configured to simultaneously operate the microcapsule production
 - 7 unit, fluidized passage and flow sensor to process the microcapsules in a
 - 8 continuous manner.
- 1 2. The microencapsulation system of claim 1, wherein the controller is further
- 2 configured to provide feedback control for the microcapsule production unit, fluidized
- 3 passage and flow sensor.
- 1 3. The microencapsulation system of claim 1, wherein the microcapsule production unit
- 2 comprises:
 - 3 a dual-dispenser system configured to form co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres;
 - 4 and
 - 5 a bath of solution configured to receive and form a membrane about the co-axial
 - 6 multi-lamellar microspheres to form microcapsules.

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1 4. The microencapsulation system of claim 3, wherein dual-dispenser system is
2 configured to form substantially uniform co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres having
3 substantially different viscosities.

1 5. The microencapsulation system of claim 3, further comprising a separation baffle
2 system arranged down stream from the microcapsule production unit, wherein the
3 separation baffle system is configured to separate residual amounts of one or more fluids
4 used to form the co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres from the solution used to form the
5 membrane about the co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres.

1 6. The microencapsulation system of claim 5, further comprising a recirculation conduit
2 configured to recycle the one or more fluids back to the dual-dispenser system.

1 7. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a recirculation
2 conduit configured to recycle the solution back to the bath.

1 8. The microencapsulation system of claim 1, wherein the flow sensor comprises:

2 an imaging system configured to acquire images of the microcapsules; and

3 a photometer configured to measure intensity of light transmitted through the
4 microcapsules.

1 9. A microencapsulation apparatus, comprising:

2 a first microsphere dispenser; and

3 a second microsphere dispenser arranged in alignment with the first microsphere
4 dispenser, wherein the apparatus is configured to form co-axial multi-
5 lamellar microcapsules from materials discharged from the first and
6 second microsphere dispensers.

1 10. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, wherein flow rates of the materials
2 discharged through the first and second microsphere dispensers are respectively
3 configured to form the co-axial multi-lamellar microcapsules.

1 11. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, further comprising first and second
2 pulsatile flow generators coupled respectively to the first and second microsphere
3 dispensers to synchronize the frequencies at which the materials are discharged from the
4 first and second microsphere dispensers to form the co-axial multi-lamellar
5 microcapsules.

1 12. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, wherein the first and second
2 microsphere dispensers are spaced apart by a distance configured to form the co-axial
3 multi-lamellar microcapsules.

1 13. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, wherein at least one of the first and
2 second microsphere dispensers comprises a plurality of nozzles configured to dispense
3 substantially uniform droplets of materials having substantially different viscosities.

1 14. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, wherein at least one of the first and
2 second microsphere dispensers comprises an ultrasonic nozzle.

1 15. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, wherein at least one of the first and
2 second microsphere dispensers is configured to move.

1 16. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a module
2 configured to direct spherical droplets formed from the materials discharged from the

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3 first and second microsphere dispensers to a chamber within the microencapsulation
4 system, wherein the chamber is adapted to suspend the spherical droplets within a fluid
5 and form a membrane around the spherical droplets to form the co-axial multi-lamellar
6 microcapsules.

1 17. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 16, wherein at least one of the first and
2 second microsphere dispensers is arranged within in the vicinity of an opening of the
3 module leading into the chamber.

1 18. The microencapsulation apparatus of claim 16, wherein the second microsphere
2 dispenser is arranged upstream from the first microsphere dispenser.

1 19. A method of fabricating and processing microcapsules, comprising:

2 forming distinct droplets comprising one or more materials; and

3 introducing the droplets directly into a solution bath to form a membrane around
4 the droplets such that a plurality of microcapsules are formed.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the steps of forming the distinct droplets and
2 introducing the droplets directly into a solution bath produce a continuous flow of the
3 microcapsules within the solution bath.

1 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:

2 passing the continuous flow of microcapsules from the solution bath directly into
3 a washing solution;

4 analyzing the microcapsules as the microcapsules flow through the washing
5 solution.

1 22. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of forming comprises:

2 dispensing substantially uniform droplets of a first fluid; and

3 coating the substantially uniform droplets with an immiscible solution.

1 23. The method of claim 22, wherein the at least one of the steps of dispensing the
2 substantially uniform droplets and coating the substantially uniform droplets comprises
3 discharging multiple fluids having substantially different viscosities.

1 24. A microencapsulation system, comprising:

2 a microcapsule production unit comprising:

3 a dual-dispenser system configured to form co-axial multi-lamellar
4 microspheres; and

5 a bath of solution configured to receive and form a membrane about the
6 co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres to form microcapsules;

7 a separation baffle system arranged down stream from the microcapsule
8 production unit, wherein the separation baffle system is configured to
9 separate residual amounts of one or more fluids used to form the co-axial
10 multi-lamellar microspheres from the solution used to form the membrane
11 about the co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres;

12 a fluidized passage for washing and harvesting microcapsules dispensed from the
13 microcapsule production unit;

14 a flow sensor for sizing and counting the microcapsules comprising:

15 an imaging system configured to acquire images of the microcapsules; and

16 a photometer configured to measure intensity of light transmitted through

17 the microcapsules; and

18 a controller configured to simultaneously operate the microcapsule production

19 unit, fluidized passage and flow sensor to process the microcapsules in a

20 continuous manner.

1 25. The microencapsulation system of claim 24, wherein the controller is further

2 configured to provide feedback control for the microcapsule production unit, fluidized

3 passage and flow sensor.

1 26. The microencapsulation system of claim 24, wherein dual-dispenser system is

2 configured to form substantially uniform co-axial multi-lamellar microspheres having

3 substantially different viscosities.